

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

1 (currently amended). A process for producing resin-coated metal particles, ~~the process comprising the steps of: coating surfaces of~~ providing metal particles with surfaces coated with silica; ~~allowing a polymerizable group to adsorb onto the surfaces of~~ combining the silica-coated metal particles by the use of with a polymerizable group ~~containing~~ silane coupling agent so as to absorb the polymerizable group onto the surfaces of the particles; and forming a polymeric resin coating on the surfaces of the silica-coated metal particles with a polymeric resin by mixing the metal particles to which the polymerizable groups adsorb; polymerizing a composition comprising a polymerizable monomer, a polymerization initiator, and a dispersant to polymerize the polymerizable monomer and the polymerizable groups in the presence of the polymerizable group-containing particles.

2 (currently amended). The process for producing the resin-coated metal particles according to claim 1, the process further comprising ~~a step of: melting~~ heating the polymeric resin on the particles at a temperature higher than the melting point of the polymeric resin and then ~~rapidly~~ cooling the polymeric resin so as to form a spherical product.

3 - 4 (Canceled)

5 (currently amended). A resin-coated metal particle comprising: a metal core having a surface ~~including a metal particle;~~ a silica layer covering the surface of the core; and a resin layer covering the silica layer.

6 (currently amended). The resin-coated metal particle according to claim 5, wherein the particle ~~comprises one~~ metal is selected from the group consisting of copper, silver, nickel, and silver-palladium.

7 (currently amended). The resin-coated metal particle according to claim ~~5 or 6~~, wherein the surface of the ~~particle~~ metal core is an oxidized surface ~~subjected to~~ ~~oxidation~~.

8 (cancelled).

9 (new). The resin-coated metal particle according to claim 7 in combination with an electrophotographic carrier.

10 (new). The resin-coated metal particle according to claim 5, wherein the surface of the metal core is an oxidized surface.

11 (new). The resin-coated metal particle according to claim 6 in combination with an electrophotographic carrier.

12 (new). The resin-coated metal particle according to claim 5 in combination with an electrophotographic carrier.

13 (new). The resin-coated metal particles according to claim 5, wherein the particles have a particle size of 0.5 to 20 μ m.

14 (new). The resin-coated metal particle according to claim 13 in combination with an electrophotographic carrier.

15 (new). The resin-coated metal particles according to claim 5, wherein the surface of the resin is spherical.

16 (new). The resin-coated metal particle according to claim 15 in combination with an electrophotographic carrier.

17 (new). A process for producing a toner for forming a circuit which comprises combining the resin-coated metal particles according to claim 5 with an electrophotographic carrier.

18 (new). The process for producing a toner according to claim 17, wherein the metal of the particles are copper.

19 (new). The process for producing a toner according to claim 17, wherein the particles are spherical.

20 (new). The process for producing the resin-coated metal particles according to claim 1, wherein the particle metal is selected from the group consisting of copper, silver, nickel, and silver-palladium.

21 (new). The process for producing the resin-coated metal particles according to claim 1, wherein the composition comprising a polymerizable monomer, a polymerization initiator, and a dispersant, and wherein the process further comprises coating the surface of the metal particles with silica.

22 (new). The process for producing the resin-coated metal particles according to claim 1, further comprising oxidizing the surface of the metal particles before coating them with silica.